

Amendments to the Drawings

Applicants have previously submitted Replacement Drawings corresponding to amended FIGS. 1 and 2 in the Reply dated April 29, 2005. The amended FIGS. 1 and 2 show or indicate “stacks or multiple numbers of several of the numbered elements.”

Since present Office Action does not clearly acknowledge or comment on the Replacement Drawings, applicants resubmit the enclosed Replacement Drawings for consideration.

REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 17-31 are pending.

Claims 17-31 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as failing to comply with the written description requirement.

The Examiner also has objected to the drawings (filed 20 May 2002) as not showing features of claims 17, 22-24 and 27-29.

Applicant's Reply

Applicants have amended claims 19 and cancelled claims 19 and 20 for clarity and consistency. Applicant respectfully traverses the objection to the drawings and the § 112 “written description” rejection.

Objections to the Drawings

Applicants submitted Replacement Drawings with the previous Reply (May 4, 2005). The present Office Action does not indicate if these were considered. Applicant requests confirmation. Applicants resubmit the Replacement Drawings herewith.

§ 112 rejection

Applicant respectfully submits that the limitation that “the cassette is disposed along a linear axis extending through the heating and cooling plates” is adequately disclosed in the written description of the invention in a manner that would be readily understood by a person of ordinary skill in the art. (See following subsection remarks)

However, to expedite issuance of a patent on the present application, applicant without prejudice has amended claim 17 to delete references to a “linear axis”

In particular, the offending “wherein” clause in claim 17 has been amended as follows:

“wherein said wafer-holding cassette/loading station is disposed ~~along a linear axis in front of said vacuum chamber, extending through wherein~~ said cooling plate and said heating plate are disposed one in front of the other in said vacuum chamber, and wherein said internal and external handling devices are configured to move said wafers ~~along said linear axis from said wafer holding cassette in front of the vacuum chamber to the said cooling plate and said heating plate in said vacuum chamber and back.~~

Applicant respectfully submits that no new matter is introduced by this amendment, which is fully supported in the written description. (See e.g., “front” in ¶¶ [0031], [0037] and [0040], and Figures 1 and 2).

Applicants respectfully submit that the claims conform to all requirements of § 112 and in condition for allowance.

Amendments to the Specification

Applicant respectfully submits that the objected to limitation that “the cassette is disposed along a linear axis extending through the heating and cooling plates” is adequately disclosed in the written description of the invention in a manner that would be readily understood by a person of ordinary skill in the art. Applicant notes that the written description of the invention includes not only the specification, but also the claims and the figures submitted in the application. Figure 1 clearly shows that the loading station/cassette is disposed about a linear axis extending through the heating and cooling plates.

For greater clarity, applicant has amended the specification ¶ [0021] to include an explicit description of this geometrical feature. In particular, in ¶ [0021] under the section

heading “Brief Description of the Drawings” Figure 1 is now described as showing “that the cooling plate, heating plate and the loading station for receiving a wafer cassette may be disposed one in front of the other about a linear axis (e.g., parallel to the rails of the internal handling system).”

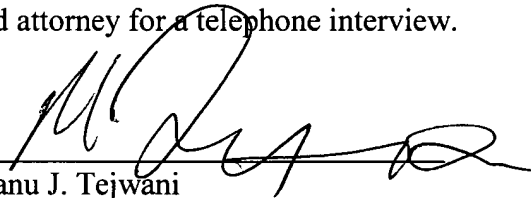
Applicants’ respectfully submit that no new matter is introduced by this amendment. (See e.g., Fig. 1, Specification).

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that this application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and prompt allowance of which are requested.

If there are any remaining issues to be resolved, applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner should kindly contact the undersigned attorney for a telephone interview.

By: _____


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